

Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission

Prohibit Floating Near Supply Ditch on the Bitterroot River

BIENNIAL RULE

PURPOSE

- (1) The following rules govern any possible temporary closure of a portion of the Bitterroot River surrounding the Supply Ditch Diversion Dam to protect public safety.
- (2) The dam is a low-head structure that creates dangerous currents that have caused numerous boat accidents including a fatality.
- (3) During flood stages, portage around the dam is very difficult.
- (4) Conditions are unpredictable and an immediate temporary closure may need to be instated to educate the public and address the safety concerns around the dam.
- (5) The Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) is outlining the circumstances that the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (Department) may temporarily close all or a portion of the Bitterroot River between Woodside Fishing Access Site and Tucker West Fishing Access Site.

BITTERROOT RIVER TEMPORARY CLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

- (1) The Department may close a portion or the entire length of the Bitterroot River between Woodside Fishing Access Site and Tucker West Fishing Access Site to floating and boating when:
 - (a) Danger at the dam is heightened; and
 - (b) Alternative ways to avoid the dam are difficult or impossible to navigate.
 - (c) The Supply Ditch Diversion Dam is being repaired.
- (2) The Department must reopen the Bitterroot River as soon as the flows are below 4000 cubic feet per second at the USGS Missoula Gauge or July 10, whichever occurs first. When the dam is repaired, the Department must reopen the Bitterroot River as soon as construction is complete.
- (3) This rule does not affect any rules that may be adopted to address unforeseen temporary, emergency situations.

This rule was adopted by the Fish and Wildlife Commission on _____
and expires two years from the date of adoption.

Dan Vermillion, Chairman
Fish and Wildlife Commission